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PARIS PASS TO UNESCO

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SUBJECT: COMMUNITY OF DEMOCRACIES ELECTION STANDARDS

INITIATIVE: QUESTIONS FROM AUSTRALIA

REF: STATE 71941

1. (U) On April 20 Poloff delivered reftel points to Nick Turner, Director of the United Nations and Commonwealth Section at the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). Turner told us on April 22 that he had conferred with the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) and the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) and that the GOA was in full agreement with the general objectives of our proposal. Turner wondered, however, whether the Community of Democracies initiative wouldn't overlap with already existing regional initiatives. He pointed to the Inter-Parliamentary Union's (IPU) 1994 "Declaration for Criteria for Free and Fair Elections," commenting that it would be a "pretty heroic task to obtain a better consensus than was reached by the 112 delegates present at the IPU Conference."

2. (U) Turner indicated that Australia was open to exploring the idea further, but had the following questions:

-- How would members be chosen for the working group?

-- What would be the time frame for setting up the body?

-- How would the body be funded?

3. (U) Turner added that Australian Ambassador to Chile, Elizabeth Schick, would be available to discuss the proposal at the April 28-30 Community of Democracies Ministerial in Santiago.

STANTON